

## Claims

1. Method for licensing and/or authorizing access to software modules in a computer-controlled switching device, characterized in that,

5           a licence database is used, in which the software modules and their assigned licence information are stored in each case,

          a configuration of at least one of these software modules initiates an interaction between the licence database and a computer-readable data carrier, in which  
10       case hardware characteristic information is created,

          the hardware characteristic information and the licence information of the a least one software module are transferred from the switching computer via a  
15       communication connection to a licence manager which is geographically remote from the exchange, and

          the licence manager creates license confirmation information and returns this to the switchboard computer, in which case the licence confirmation information decides  
20       in the switchboard computer about the authorization of the at least one software module.

2. Method in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that a cryptographic algorithm is used for the interaction between the licence database and the computer-readable  
25       data carrier.

3. Method in accordance with claim 1 or 2, characterized in that an asymmetric encryption method is used for the interaction between the licence database and the computer-readable data carrier.

- 30 4. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 3, characterized in that a portable data carrier is used as

the computer-readable data carrier.

5. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 4, characterized in that a smart card, a chip card or an SD/MultiMedia card is used as the portable data carrier.
- 5 6. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the hardware characteristic information and the licence information is transferred from the switching computer to the licence manager in encrypted form.
- 10 7. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 6, characterized in that the license manager is implemented as a server which is networked with the switching device via a communications network.
8. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 7, characterized in that the license manager, in creating the licence confirmation information, uses a licence reference database in which reference information is stored which contains in each case reference information assigned to operators of switching devices.
- 15 8. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 7, characterized in that the license manager, in creating the licence confirmation information, uses a licence reference database in which reference information is stored which contains in each case reference information assigned to operators of switching devices.
- 20 9. Method according to claim 8, characterized in that each item of reference information contains licences of software modules purchased by an operator.
10. Method in accordance with claim 7 and 8, characterized in that, for the case in which the licence information of a software module to be configured is contained in the licences purchased by the operator, license confirmation information is created which authorizes the permanent operation of the at least one software module in the switching device.
- 25 10. Method in accordance with claim 7 and 8, characterized in that, for the case in which the licence information of a software module to be configured is contained in the licences purchased by the operator, license confirmation information is created which authorizes the permanent operation of the at least one software module in the switching device.

11. Method in accordance with claim 7 and 8, characterized in that, for the case in which the licence information of a software module to be configured is not contained in the licences purchased by the operator, license confirmation  
5 information is created which authorizes test operation of the least one software module in the switching device over a predetermined period of time.
12. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 11,  
characterized in that the communication connection between  
10 the switching device and the licence manager is routed via a circuit-switched and/or packet-switched communication network.